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## Speeches, A Quarter Century Homecoming

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

at the

University of Montana Foundation Dinner

Civic Center, Helena, Montana

Saturday, October 14, 1967

7:30 p.m. (MDST)

A QUARTER CENTURY HOMECOMING

For a quarter of a century, it has been my privilege to represent Montana in the Congress of the United States. Along with responsibilities, this public service has brought me deep personal satisfactions. It has also had, I regret to say, one serious drawback. It has compelled me to live and work far from the State. That has not been easy, especially since my heart never left home in the first place.

In 1942, as a new Member of the House of Representatives, I had no idea how long Montanans would want me to stay in Congress. I was persuaded then, as I am now, however, that if I did not forget the people of Montana, they would not forget me.

Twenty-five years is a long time but I have not forgotten. The tie which holds me to the State has grown stronger with the passing of time.

Over the years, I have come home to Montana many, many times. Yet it has never seemed often enough, or for long enough. I have come home for reasons political and non-political; to campaign for office, to escort a President, to open a dam, to gauge an earthquake's damage, to measure the depths of a recession or the ravishes of a long and bitter winter.

I have come home to talk with editors and reporters, with teachers, with students, with children. I have come home to talk with businessmen, farmers, and workers in every part of the State. I have come home to talk with long-rooted Montanans, with new arrivals and with wayfarers in the cities and towns, in the mountains and on the plains of the State.

There have been homecomings for a hundred specific reasons and homecomings for no particular reason. Those which I remember best, tonight, are the personal homecomings, the homecom-



ings of any Montanan away who has felt the need to be re-immersed in the beauty of the State, in the sense of its history, and in the warmth of its people and so to be renewed from the deep well-springs of Montana life.

A few weeks ago I tried to describe this need to friends in Washington who gathered for the same purpose which brings us together tonight. How do you explain to those who are not of this State why it is that Montanans outside Montana are always homesick for Montana?

I tried to tell them of the symphony of color which surrounds us. Of the shades of red and purple on the plains. Of the blue of the big sky as it is reflected in a mountain lake and of the ice blue of a tumbling stream. Of the white of drifting clouds and the white of snow on a mountain peak. Of the infinite variations on green in the valleys and in the great forests. Of the rainbows on the hillsides when the heather, the columbines, the Mariposa lilies, the bitterroot, the Kinnikinnick and a hundred other wild flowers and shrubs are in bloom.

I asked them, too,--these friends of Montana in the East--to listen to the symphony of Montana in the unique sounds which our children begin to hear almost as soon as the baby's rattle is put aside. They listened and they heard the music which echoes in the names of mountain ranges like the Beaverhead, the Sapphire, the Bear Paws, the Highwoods, the Crazies, and the Big and Little Belts. They heard it, too, in the rivers and streams which we call the Jefferson, the Madison, the Gallatin, the Milk, the Tongue, the Powder, the Boulder and the like. They heard it as I read the roll of some of our cities and towns--cities and towns with names like Eureka, Chinook, Whitefish, Cut Bank, Circle, Hungry Horse, Absarokee, Butte, Wolf Point and Great Falls. And Lodge Grass, Lame Deer, Deer Lodge, Crow Agency, Bigfork and Twodot.

I tried to tell them, too,--these friends who are not Montanans--something of our history. Of its beginnings with the Indians, with the Crows, the Blackfeet, the Assiniboine, the Flatheads, the Northern Cheyennes, and the Chippewa-Crees and all the rest. Of its modern inception in the Lewis and Clark expedi-



tions and the opening of the fur trade and then the gold rush. I told them of the birth of a ghost town, of Confederate Gulch, of how it grew on gold from population zero to 10,000 in six years and how, in the seventh, the gold was gone and only 64 lonely souls remained. I told them something of our violence--of Henry Plummer, the Sheriff who murdered and plundered 102 of the citizens he was supposed to be protecting before he was hung by the Vigilantes. And I told them something of our decency--of Wesley Van Orsdel--Borther Van--the Methodist Minister who got off a steamer at Fort Benton and went to the Four Deuces saloon which closed the bar for an hour in order that the patrons might hear his sermon.

I mentioned these almost legendary figures of our history and other renowned Montanans who came out of the turbulence of a new State in a young country and left the mark of their fierce convictions on the Federal Government. I told them, for example, of the old master, Charlie Russell, the greatest artist of the West in all the history of the Republic, of Jeanette Rankin who

so deeply abhorred violence that she voted against the nation's entry into World War I and then cast the only vote against entry into World War II, of the great Thomas J. Walsh, of James Murray, Joe Dixon, and Burton K. Wheeler.

They heard, too, our friends in Washington a few weeks ago, of the "booms and busts," which were so characteristic of the State's economic history, as the emphasis shifted from gold, to silver and to copper at Butte and Anaconda. They heard of the overloading of the plains of Central and Eastern Montana with sheep and cattle until the cruel winter of 1886-87 turned 90 percent of the animals into frozen grotesques.

They heard of the railroads thundering out across the plains, and of settlers from Scandinavia, Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, France, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and a score of other countries who were drawn by the "milk and honey" of free lands; they came in great droves until the great drought of 1917 left the earth parched and the people stricken.



In short, I tried to give them--these friends in the East--a glimpse of the Montana story, which, in the end, is the story of people. It is the story of a people who heard the siren call of the West and who knew great dreams and the collapse of great dreams. It is a story of a people who have lived with fear as well as courage and with cruelty as well as compassion, of a people who have known not only the favor but the fury of a towering nature. It is the story of a people who, blended of what/<sup>was found here with</sup> what/<sup>was</sup> brought here, renewed the dream after each crumbling, a people who persevered and, at last, took distinct and enduring root.

That sense of Montana went with me to Washington a quarter of a century ago. It remains with me tonight. In the intervening years, I have tried to give it expression as one of the representatives of this State, in all of the Congressional confrontations with the issues of our times.

Some of these confrontations come to mind, tonight, as highlights in the sweep of events during the past twenty-five years. There was the war which began for us at Pearl Harbor, a



year before I went to Washington, and ended in my second term.

It ended, really, in the blinding flash at Hiroshima. In that instant the world threw off, at last, the nightmare of totalitarian violence, not yet realizing that it had entered upon a second nightmare born in the laboratories of science.

Since Hiroshima, we have lived in the shadow of nuclear war. It is twenty-five years later but neither by way of the United Nations or by any other means has it been possible to dispel the shadow.

The United Nations actually came into being almost simultaneously with the first explosion of the nuclear bomb. Even as the latter flashed the danger of an ultimate war, the former lit the hope of mankind for an enduring peace. The hope which burned brightly at first began to flicker as recrimination begat recrimination and quarrel followed quarrel between former allies. Then came the tidal wave of revolution in China and the brutal war in Korea. That war put to final rest the world's expectation of a simple peace, self-generated and automatically maintained.

Postwar disillusionments, as well as a growing American awareness of the realities of the world situation and simple human compassion led us to a Marshal Plan. Afterward, there came the North Atlantic Treaty, and a massive system of aid-programs and alliances which have spread the power and resources of the United States over most of the globe. If I may digress, I want to reiterate the view to which I have given expression many times in many years. These programs and alliances have not only spread the nation's power and resources throughout the world. In my judgment, they have seriously overspread them. I have worked for a cautious curtailment of these commitments and it is my intention to continue to work for their curtailment.

After the breakdown of Korea, there began a search for ways to repair the great ruptures in the world. With the help of the United Nations, President Eisenhower negotiated a truce in Korea. Another was devised for Viet Nam and Indo-China by the Geneva Conference of 1954.



Throughout his administration, Mr. Eisenhower pursued a policy of reasonable reconciliation with the Communist countries. In particular, he restored contacts of civility with the Soviet Union by the cultivation of personal cordiality with its leaders.

The spark which was kindled by his predecessor was nurtured by President Kennedy. He brought a youthful energy and imagination into the search for peace and, in its pursuit, he ventured with prudence but without fear into new channels of policy. In the years of the renewal of hope for a durable peace under Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, progress has been by no means steady or consistent. A tortuous step forward, all too frequently, has been followed by a sudden step backward. A Camp David meeting of Eisenhower and Khrushchev and then a U-2 incident; a nuclear test ban treaty and a Cuban missile crisis; a resumption of limited commercial relations with Eastern Europe and an outbreak of severe hostilities in Southeast Asia.

In this fashion, the world has gone through crises after crises. We have been, I regret to say, too often on thin ice during this past quarter of a century. We are on thin ice now. I must tell you in all frankness that the situation which has grown out of the war in Viet Nam, in my judgment, is the most serious and complex with which this nation has been confronted since the end of World War II. In a little over two years, the American commitment of manpower has had to be raised from 45,000 to over 450,000. Thirteen thousand young Americans have died in Viet Nam and our total casualties now surpass 100,000.

What has happened so far, moreover, may well be only prelude, unless the war can be brought to an honorable conclusion in the near future. As it is now, there lies ahead only the prospect of a deepening involvement and a further expansion of the conflict in Southeast Asia and, perhaps, a direct confrontation with Communist China. Even now our planes which fly over North Viet Nam bomb less than 30 seconds away from the Chinese



border and two have been shot down over the Chinese mainland during the past few months.

In these circumstances, to make light of the danger of war with China would be the height of irresponsibility. To do so, in my judgment, would be to play games with the security of this nation and, perhaps, with the very survival of civilization.

It has been said that foreign relations has been one of the loves of my life. I am not certain that love is the accurate word in view of the gloom with which I have just surrounded the subject. I do know, however, that the changes of the past quarter of a century have made it necessary for all citizens and, certainly, Members of the Senate to school themselves deeply in the circumstances and problems of international life.

The foreign policies of the nation affect in a very direct sense all Americans wherever they live. If there is any doubt about it, note that well over half the budget of the Federal Government--which is covered by your taxes--is consigned

to defense expenditures. This year, the cost of military operations in Viet Nam alone will run between \$25 and \$30 billion and military outlays as a whole will be well in excess of \$70 billion.

In a very real sense, therefore, the great burden of federal expenditures originates in breakdowns of international peace and in the inability of the nations of the world to build a reliable structure of international order and security. In that sense, therefore, the study of foreign policy is not so much a love as it is an imperative. As a Senator of Montana, it is a responsibility which I owe to this State and to the nation.

I would not wish to leave the impression that, as viewed from Washington, the past twenty-five years have been uniformly grim and gray. On the contrary, we have been participants--all of us--in the marvels which have been wrought by modern education, science and technology in these years of our times. When I was first elected to Congress the nation was producing goods and services at the then astounding rate of \$158 billion a year. The current output is at an estimated \$780 billion. All



sectors of the economy and every geographic region of the country have benefitted to some degree from the scientific and technological progress and the immense economic dynamism of the United States during the past quarter of a century.

That includes Montana. In fact, Montana is a good case in point. Great ribbons of modern highways now criss-cross the State. I have already mentioned the dams built and building to curb the headlong rush of Montana's water to the sea. Hundreds of smaller projects aid in this task and also serve to transform once arid lands into productive oases. Power lines, both private and co-operative, cover the State in an ever growing network. Airports dot the landscape. Magnificent federal and State parks put the highway and airport systems to the test by attracting an ever-growing number of tourists. An enormous increase in classrooms and an expanded university complex reflect the addition of 150,000 persons to the State's population as well as a national determination to improve the quality and availability of education for young people.

In these ways and others, the progress which has been made arises from a creative federal-state-local partnership and both public and private initiatives. That is another way of emphasizing that in addition to being citizens of Montana or Pennsylvania or Alaska, we are also--all of us--Americans linked in a common national effort and a common national destiny. If I have learned anything in my associations in Washington with people from all parts of the country, it is that "we are all in this together."

It would be my hope that we will bear in mind this essential unity as we move towards the last quarter of the 20th Century. The future of Montana can be found only in a nation with a future, even as the nation's future requires a world with a future.

As Montanans we have unique State problems and unique State assets. They have to do in great part with the conservation of our human endowment no less than <sup>with</sup> the wise usage of



our natural endowment. I refer to the tendency of too many of Montana's young people to go away and to build their lives outside the State. Our great task in the years ahead will be to open within Montana new frontiers of opportunity for young men and women--in education, in science and technology, in industry and in every aspect of modern interest and endeavor. We want and we need our young people here.

As Americans as well as Montanans we also have a responsibility to contribute to the fullest extent possible to the solution of the problems which are crowding in upon the rapidly growing and urbanizing population elsewhere in the nation. Montana's sparse population has spared us many of these difficulties at least for the present. We are not exempt, however, from a share of national responsibility, under the Constitution, for a contribution to the resolution of these difficulties.

Similarly, we have a responsibility to make felt in the foreign policies of this nation what I described as "the sense of Montana." Let me make clear, therefore, that as long

as the people of this State ask me to represent them in the Senate , as I intend to go on working in every appropriate way in cooperation and in the independent responsibilities of my office for an end to the war in Viet Nam in an honorable peace. I intend to make whatever contribution I can to the lifting of the fear of a cosmic world conflict in order that the immense energies and resources, which are now paid in tribute to that fear, may be redirected one day to the constructive works of a nation at peace in a world at peace.

That is the fundamental task which confronts this nation as it does all nations. Indeed, it gives special meaning to the purpose for which we are gathered tonight, because/ <sup>the</sup> lecture series on international relations which is projected can open new channels of understanding between the people of this State and our neighbors on this globe.

I need not tell you that the realization that these lectures will be taking place in my name has given me, if I may



use the words, my finest hour. To be able to share it with you tonight fills my heart to the full. It is far more than I ever expected when I went to Washington to represent Montana in the Congress a quarter of a century ago. It is far more than I deserve.

Indeed, I should like this honor to go where it is most due--to the woman who set out with me from Butte so long ago and who has remained a wise counsellor and steadfast inspiration through all these years. Without her, I would not be in the Congress of the United States. Indeed, I should not have reached the University of Montana or for that matter ever receive a high school certificate. A more appropriate title for the lecture series, indeed, would be "The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Lectures."

I would like also to reiterate an earlier suggestion to the sponsors of this enterprise. If it is appropriate, in their judgment, I believe a modest maximum should be established for the capital of the Fund for the lectures on international affairs. If any additional monies should become available beyond

that maximum, I should like to see the excess go into scholarship aid at the undergraduate or graduate level for the children of Montana's--and the nation's--first Americans who have not always had benefit in equal measure with the rest of us from Montana's development and the nation's progress. I refer to my friends and brothers--the Northern Cheyennes, the Crows, the Flatheads, the Assiniboines, the Blackfeet, the Chippewa-Crees, the Landless and all the others who live in Montana.

I suggest this procedure because the lecture series by its very nature turns our attention to the world beyond our borders and to the promise of a fruitful future for Montanans and all Americans in a world with a future. It is good that our attention is so directed provided we are also prepared to look inward and backward and so, remember what it is that we are building upon and that progress has its price. In that way we may be able to fill some of the gaps and heal some of the wounds which have been opened in the process of arriving at where we are. In that way, we shall better tie the past into the present and open wider the horizons of the future.